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ABSTRACT

This document provides a framework for local education agencies to monitor, support, and evaluate basic skills provision for adults. It sets out a general approach to evaluation based on three crucial factors in basic skills provision: inputs, process, and outcomes. It suggests some possible program indicators for basic skills, including average class size, student enrollment, student progress, student attendance, and program cost. A Basic Skills Checklist is intended to be used to help evaluate the effectiveness of a basic skills program. The answers to each question in the checklist can be scored on a scale of 0-10. A target score of 75 percent is recommended for each section. Sections focus on these areas to be evaluated: planning, resources, provision, practice, and staffing. (YLB)

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EVALUATING EFFECTIVENESS IN ADULT LITERACY AND BASIC SKILLS

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An ALBSU Good Practice Document

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ALBSU
Adult Literacy & Basic Skills Unit

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FOREWORD

IN 1983 ALBSU published the first in a series of discussion documents on Good Practice in Adult Literacy and Basic Skills. These documents – and the seminars the Unit organised following publication – played a major part, I believe, in improving practice and the quality of basic skills provision in England and Wales. Whilst the discussion documents suggested targets to aim for rather than goals which could be achieved speedily, it is encouraging that so many LEAs have adopted, and in some cases, achieved these targets. ALBSU Good Practice documents try to avoid merely reflecting current practice; we also attempt to avoid the over use of terms such as 'adequate' and 'appropriate' particularly as these terms are open to wide interpretation.

Each Good Practice document has reflected a view from the 'centre'. We acknowledge the need to adapt and modify nationally set standards to take account of local circumstances particularly as each Local Education Authority is responsible for the provision it funds. ALBSU's aim is not to be prescriptive but, rather, to stimulate discussion about the funding, monitoring and support of adult literacy and basic skills provision.

'Evaluating Effectiveness in Adult Literacy and Basic Skills' attempts to provide a framework for considering the effectiveness and efficiency of basic skills work with adults. It is not intended to be used to evaluate English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision for adults, although you may find that some of it may be relevant or can be adapted for use in ESOL.

'Evaluating Effectiveness' sets out a general approach to evaluation, suggests some possible 'Programme Indicators' for basic skills and provides a Checklist for basic skills programme organisers.

Evaluation should not be seen as a tiresome, bureaucratic and administrative exercise undertaken to try us all. If approached sensitively, it is a positive and helpful attempt to find out the strengths and weaknesses of what is provided and can lead to a constructive dialogue about the ways in which provision might be improved. To be effective, evaluation must be centrally concerned with the quality of tuition received by basic skills students; evaluation should not be an occasional imposition designed to reduce the cost of what is currently being provided. 'Value for money' in basic education is not the cheapest possible service irrespective of quality.

I hope that *'Evaluating Effectiveness in Adult Literacy and Basic Skills'* will stimulate discussion and debate and prove a useful contribution to this important area of basic skills work.

Peter Davis

Peter Davis
Chairman
ALBSU Management Committee

BACKGROUND

IT is estimated that just over 13% of adults in the UK have serious difficulties with literacy or numeracy. (National Child Development Study 1987). This means that almost 6 million adults in the UK have very real problems with these essential basic skills. In addition approximately 500,000 adults who do not speak English as their mother tongue have difficulties with English.

About twice as many men as women have difficulties with literacy, but women have greater difficulties with numeracy than men. Although definitive evidence is not available, there does not appear to be a concentration of adults with basic skills problems in any particular age grouping.

People who lack mastery of basic skills do not live in any single geographical area in the UK. They are, however, more likely to live in areas where manual work is the norm for many employees and are less likely to live in areas where a large number of managerial and white collar employees live. Adults with basic skills problems are more likely to be unemployed than other adults, are likely to be on lower incomes and are less likely to have received any post school education or training.

Some adults find even the simplest written material extremely difficult to read. Others can read a little, or even fairly fluently, but find writing, particularly spelling, creates substantial problems. As far as numeracy is concerned some people find it difficult to undertake even the simplest calculations.

Many adults are embarrassed and stigmatised because of their lack of mastery of basic skills and therefore creative and wide-ranging publicity is necessary to reach and motivate potential students. Moreover, lack of mastery of basic skills such as reading, writing and basic maths seriously affects the lives of many adults. Employment increasingly relies on good basic skills. Promotion and vocational training is often denied to those who find these crucial skills difficult. Current basic skills provision for adults, despite an expansion in recent years, is still providing for little more than a small percentage of those in need.

INTRODUCTION

1. *'Evaluating Effectiveness in Adult Literacy and Basic Skills'* is intended to help LEAs monitor, support and evaluate basic skills provision for adults. Recently there has been a greater emphasis on the evaluation of effectiveness throughout the education service, much of the impetus for which has come from the Education Reform Act (ERA) which places considerable importance on local management and strategic planning. The role of Local Education Authorities (LEAs) is changing as ERA takes effect, with LEAs assuming a greater planning, co-ordination and monitoring role, whilst much of the direct responsibility for education provision rests with governors of schools and colleges.

2. The main focus for evaluating basic skills is likely to be at the *'programme'* level. By 'programme', ALBSU means basic skills provision organised by an agency, organisation or institution in a specific geographical area or for a specific group of people. For example, in an LEA's area, basic skills programmes may be being offered by a number of organisations; 'programmes' may be being offered by one or more colleges of further education, by one or more adult or community education centres or by a number of voluntary organisations

3. Some 'programmes' will be based within a specific geographical area of the authority and will be the responsibility of a full or part-time paid organiser or co-ordinator. Thus, whilst a few classes provided in a centre will not usually be a 'programme', classes held in a number of centres in a specified geographical area and co-ordinated or organised by a paid member of staff will. Larger LEAs will usually contain a number of programmes often co-ordinated across the authority, whilst smaller LEAs may contain a single programme which is the responsibility of an organiser/co-ordinator, although tuition may take place in a number of different centres.

4. Much of the evaluation of adult literacy and basic skills provision to date has been a fairly informal process. Often the obvious social worth of basic skills work has been seen as good enough to justify expenditure. Furthermore, the struggle for an area of education and training, often seen as marginal, has been concentrated, quite rightly, on the need to establish adequate levels of funding and support.

5. Any framework for evaluating effectiveness of basic skills provision must reflect the principles and practices of the service. Basic skills is an *essential* area of education and training provision rather than merely desirable; furthermore, a high quality basic skills service has to be 'needs led' rather than 'demand led'. Inappropriate staff/student ratios, too great an emphasis on qualifications achieved and concentration on overly simplistic outcomes will seriously undermine even the best and most resilient basic skills service and lead to a lowering of morale and a fear about the future. However, a framework for evaluation in basic skills must not avoid posing difficult questions; an approach which encourages woolly and overly subjective judgment will do little to convince anyone that the service is effective.

6. Evaluation of effectiveness in basic skills needs to relate to methods of evaluation in other parts of the education service if it is to have credibility with funders and policy makers, as well as with basic skills students. A purely subjective method of evaluation devised merely to protect existing practice, good or bad, will not be credible and will undermine the future of basic skills provision.

7. A framework for the evaluation of effectiveness, of basic skills, needs to be accessible to as many people involved or interested in basic skills work as possible. Evaluation is not just the task of LEA officers, advisers or inspectors; nor is evaluation a purely external activity, although, on occasions, an external perspective from HMI or an agency such as ALBSU may be useful. Staff, volunteers and students should all be involved in evaluating the effectiveness of basic skills provision, rather than being seen as the subjects of the evaluation process.

8. There is a need, however, to strike a balance between evaluating effectiveness and actually doing the job. The most important part of basic skills work is teaching and everything else needs to be designed to make this central task as effective as possible. Too much time spent on evaluation will actually lead to a less effective service and a feeling that evaluation is the only important task. Furthermore, both time and resources will be needed to undertake evaluation; evaluation without additional resources to carry it out properly will be ineffective and frustrating for all concerned.

INPUTS, PROCESS AND OUTCOMES

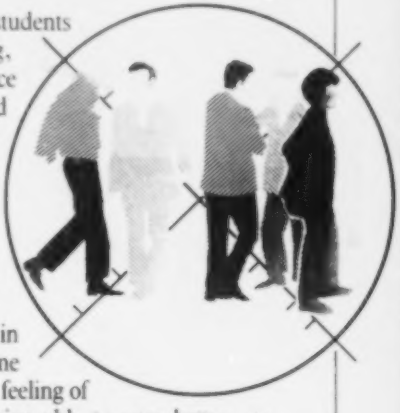
9. ALBSU's approach to evaluating effectiveness, which is outlined in this good practice document, is based on three crucial factors in basic skills provision – *INPUTS, PROCESS AND OUTCOMES*. In our view evaluation is too often only concerned with the outcomes of a particular activity and little attention is given to either inputs or the process involved. Yet there is a strong link between outcomes, process and inputs in basic skills work. If you don't put any petrol in a car and don't drive properly there will not be much point in asking why the journey has not been successful. It is impossible to achieve successful outcomes in basic skills work if inputs, in terms of funding and professional support, are minimal.

10. Adequacy is a key issue in planning and evaluation and it is important that statements of adequacy are as specific as possible; too often adequacy statements are little more than vague pronouncements which are difficult to translate into reality for policy makers or those working 'on the ground'. Furthermore, adequacy needs to be about the quality of provision as well as about the scale of what is provided. Part of an LEAs responsibility in funding basic skills work is to ensure that a 'quality threshold' is passed by providers.

11. Evaluation needs to be concerned with process as well as inputs and outcomes, particularly in a service which involves a large number of people who have little faith in educational organisations and little belief in their own ability to learn. By process, we mean what takes place during learning and what we have tried to do is to set down the established principles and practice which ALBSU believes should be the 'hallmark' of any high quality basic skills provision for adults. Much of this has been set down in material published for students and tutors by the Unit and its predecessors in the last fifteen years. Much of it also underpins staff training, guidance and support for teachers, volunteers and organisers.

12. Outcomes are very important in basic skills yet it is an area which is very difficult to judge. A successful outcome for one student would not be considered significant by another, particularly in an area of education where motives and aims are often very individual. Furthermore, 'success' may only become apparent some time after a student has ceased tuition and it is time consuming and difficult to follow-up every student after they have left a basic skills programme.

13. For most adult literacy and basic skills students success is a real improvement in reading, writing, spelling or basic maths; evidence that they can use these skills in ways and to a level which was not possible before they began tuition. For others, it is the tangible achievement of gaining a qualification or getting a better job or promotion at work. More difficult to judge, however, is the 'by products' of tuition such as improved confidence, less embarrassment and a greater belief in your own ability to learn. Certainly, some basic skills students leave tuition with a feeling of success even if success only means being able to cope better, or learning to live with the, albeit less than perfect, skills they have acquired.

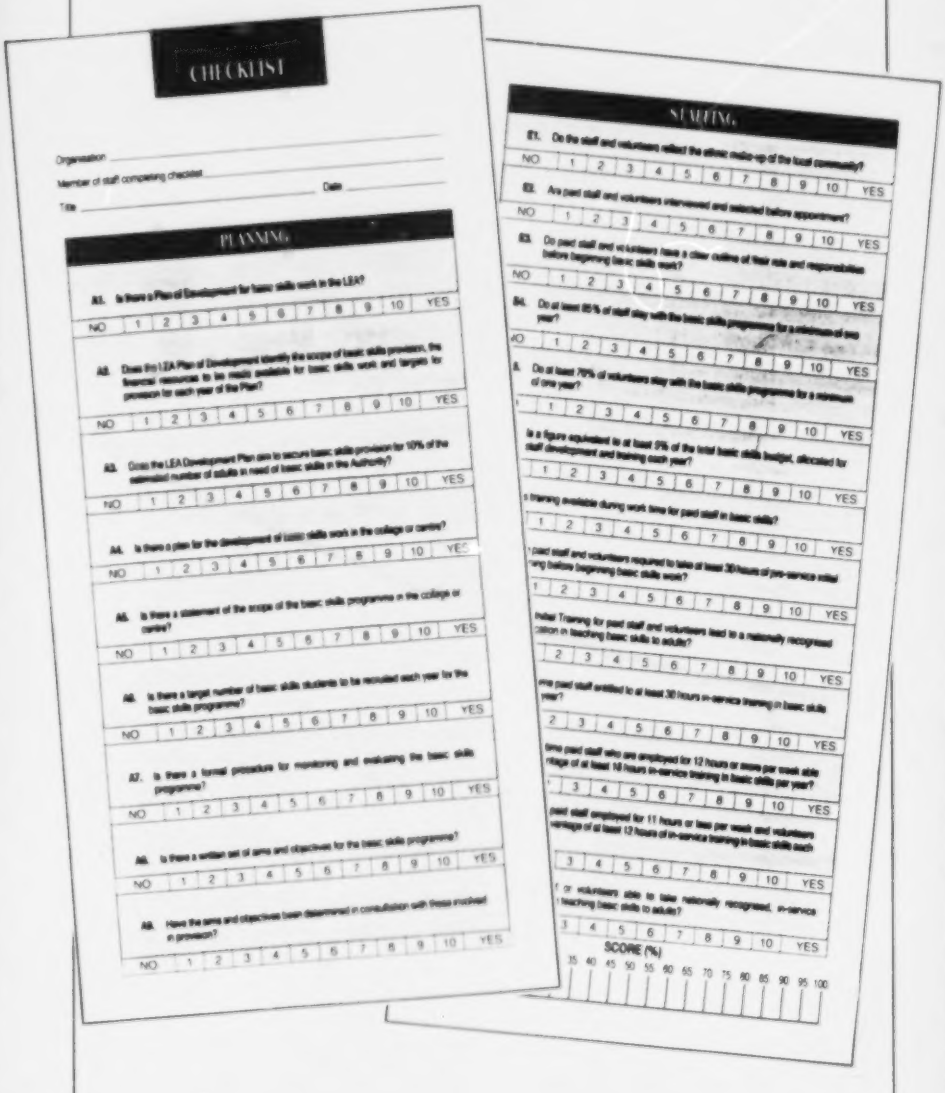


14. Even more difficult to judge is the effect basic skills provision has on our society as a whole. We would like to believe that it makes us a more caring society as well as allows us to compete better economically. Undoubtedly, if people can cope better with essential basic skills such as literacy and numeracy, they are more likely to be able to make a significant contribution to the development of society and are less likely to be dependent on others.

15. As a result of success in improving basic skills, students might also be more vocal in demanding access to opportunities and keener on obtaining what they feel are their rights. Although this may sometimes be uncomfortable, it is important to remember that basic skills work is about equity and empowerment not about making people more dependent. Whilst ALBSU believes the primary measure of success must always be a measurable improvement in literacy or numeracy skills, we acknowledge that there are other measures of success which may need to be taken into account in evaluating effectiveness.

THE CHECKLIST

16. *'Evaluating Effectiveness in Adult Literacy and Basic Skills'* contains a **Checklist** for use in considering the strengths and weaknesses of basic skills programmes. It is doubtful if any individual will possess all of the information required to complete the Checklist. Some questions may be answered fairly easily by practitioners, whilst others will need to be checked with LEA officers or senior college management. Because some questions may never have been asked (i.e. how much is spent on basic skills work?), just asking may provide a useful opportunity to find out some essential information. Other questions need to be asked of current or past basic skills students and it may not be possible to do this very frequently.


CHECKLIST

Organisation

Member of staff completing checklist

Title Date

PLANNING

A1. Is there a Plan of Development for basic skills work in the LEA?

NO 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 YES

A2. Does the LEA Plan of Development identify the scope of basic skills provision, the financial resources to be made available for basic skills work and targets for provision for each year of the Plan?

NO 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 YES

A3. Does the LEA Development Plan aim to secure basic skills provision for 10% of the estimated number of adults in need of basic skills in the Authority?

NO 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 YES

A4. Is there a plan for the development of basic skills work in the college or centre?

NO 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 YES

A5. Is there a statement of the scope of the basic skills programme in the college or centre?

NO 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 YES

A6. Is there a target number of basic skills students to be recruited each year for the basic skills programme?

NO 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 YES

A7. Is there a formal procedure for monitoring and evaluating the basic skills programme?

NO 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 YES

A8. Is there a written set of aims and objectives for the basic skills programme?

NO 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 YES

A9. Have the aims and objectives been determined in consultation with those involved in provision?

NO 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 YES

STAFFING

B1. Do the staff and volunteers reflect the ethnic make-up of the local community?

NO 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 YES

B2. Are paid staff and volunteers interviewed and selected before appointment?

NO 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 YES

B3. Do paid staff and volunteers have a clear outline of their role and responsibilities before beginning basic skills work?

NO 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 YES

B4. Do at least 85% of staff stay with the basic skills programme for a minimum of one year?

NO 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 YES

B5. Do at least 70% of volunteers stay with the basic skills programme for a minimum of one year?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 YES

Is a figure equivalent to at least 3% of the total basic skills budget, allocated for staff development and training each year?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 YES

s training available during work time for paid staff in basic skills?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 YES

paid staff and volunteers required to take at least 30 hours of pre-service initial ning before beginning basic skills work?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 YES

Initial Training for paid staff and volunteers lead to a nationally recognised ication in teaching basic skills to adults?

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 YES

ere paid staff entitled to at least 30 hours in-service training in basic skills year?

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 YES

Some paid staff who are employed for 12 hours or more per week also ntage of at least 18 hours in-service training in basic skills per year?

3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 YES

paid staff employed for 11 hours or less per week and volunteers ntage of at least 12 hours of in-service training in basic skills each

3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 YES

or volunteers able to take nationally recognised, in-service teaching basic skills to adults?

3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 YES

SCORE (%)

35 40 45 50 55 60 65 70 75 80 85 90 95 100

17. The Education Reform Act (1988) requires Local Education Authorities (LEAs) to monitor and evaluate education and training provided by colleges of further education as part of Schemes of Delegation. ALBSU believes that command of basic skills is so crucial to much learning and progression that LEAs need to take a key strategic role in planning and ensuring that high quality basic skills provision exists throughout the authority's area. This is not an area of education and training that can be left to chance.

18. Most LEAs are basing monitoring and evaluation on the Joint Efficiency Study, *'Managing Colleges Efficiently'* (DES/WOED 1987). Although all basic skills provision does not have to be brought within Schemes of Delegation, most LEAs are considering the criteria to use for the evaluation of basic skills programmes.

19. Much evaluation will be carried out at institution level (i.e. college or adult centre), although evaluation of individual programme areas such as basic skills will also be necessary. ALBSU believes that it is important that appropriate indicators are developed for basic skills programmes, particularly as this programme area is different in many ways from more 'traditional' courses and programmes.

20. ALBSU believes that the following 'programme indicators' should be adopted for basic skills programmes:

- Average Class Size
- Student Enrolment
- Student Progress
- Student Attendance
- Programme Cost

Average Class Size

21. Most educational institutions will be concerned to ensure that the average Staff/Student Ratio (SSR) is broadly in line with the ratio suggested in the 'Joint Efficiency Study'. Different programme areas will continue, however, to have different SSRs depending on the nature of the programmes concerned. ALBSU believes that there needs to be a lower SSR in basic skills than in some other programme areas, particularly as basic skills students need a considerable amount of guidance, counselling and support and most tuition includes an element of individual teaching. Teaching groups need to be kept relatively small and specialist organisers and co-ordinators have to be employed to provide support, organise and co-ordinate provision and monitor and evaluate programmes.

22. The key 'programme indicator' for basic skills is, we believe, Average Class Size (ACS). Over 80% of basic skills students currently learn in small groups and although ALBSU is committed to developing greater choice in basic skills, particularly through open learning, the majority of students are likely to learn in small groups in the immediate future. Certainly the staff/student ratio for basic skills should allow an average class size of 1 paid tutor to 6-8 students at a beginning level and 1 paid tutor to 8-10 students at a more advanced level, irrespective of the number of volunteers assisting. This average

class size should be calculated on the average attendance rather than the total number of students on roll some of whom may not attend on a regular basis or at all.

Student Enrolment

23. Most basic skills provision works on a 'roll on, roll off' basis rather than operating as 'time specified' courses. Students enrol throughout the year and can cease tuition at any time when they feel they have achieved their aims. Although the single biggest intake is usually in the Autumn, many students join basic skills programmes later in the year.

24. Basic skills programmes also tend to act as a first 'port of call' for many potential students. Some undoubtedly discover that they do not need help with basic skills or that the type of opportunities available do not suit them. Others are referred to more appropriate education or training opportunities. Often these students are recorded as enrolments although they may only attend an initial session. ALBSU believes that enrolments should only include students who have attended at least three consecutive sessions, if statistics are to reflect accurately the level of a basic skills programmes' activity.

25. ALBSU believes that there is a need for sustained growth in the number of learning opportunities available for adults wanting to improve their basic skills throughout England and Wales over the next few years and we believe that LEAs should plan for this growth. ALBSU believes that a reasonable target for LEAs is to fund provision in order that 10% of the estimated number of adults in need of help with basic skills in the authority's area can be enrolled in the 1994-95 academic year. (September 1994 – August 1995).

Student Progress

26. Student completion in basic skills is rather more difficult to determine than completion in more 'traditional' course based education and training. Some students attend basic skills programmes for relatively short periods, such as a few weeks or a few months, and cease tuition directly they achieve their aims. Others attend for lengthy periods of perhaps two to three years, either because progress is necessarily slow or because their original aims are revised in favour of longer term goals. Neither does completion necessarily occur at the end of a term or an academic year.

27. One of the most important 'programme indicators' in basic skills is student progress. Basic skills programmes have assessed student progress for some time although this has often been a relatively informal process. The 'Progress Profile' and the Basic Skills Accreditation Initiative (BSAI) developed by ALBSU provide a more structured method of assessment of progress. The 'Progress Profile' through the assessment of individual student progress against original aims and BSAI through competence based accreditation. Both of these should encourage a more systematic approach to the assessment of student progress in basic skills.

28. Whilst a demonstrable improvement in basic skills, such as reading, writing and basic maths, is the most important measure of student progress in an adult literacy and basic skills programme, other examples of student progress also need to be taken into account in

evaluating the effectiveness of a programme. Progression is important for some (although not all) basic skills students and this may be one important measure of effectiveness. Some adults see basic skills as the 'gateway' to education and training and eventually move from basic skills programmes to a wide range of other learning opportunities. Others see the achievement of competence in basic skills as an end in itself and to see basic skills programmes as merely the 'bottom rung of an education and training ladder' is to artifically narrow the range and objectives of programmes.

29. Basic skills programmes must be centrally concerned with helping adults and young people to improve basic skills such as reading, writing and basic maths. This is generally what students expect to achieve and it is a disservice to suggest to them that other outcomes are more valuable.

30. If a student is not making measurable progress in improving his or her basic skills, tutors and organisers should be keen to find out what needs to be done to improve the rate of progress. If a significant number of students are not making progress, it is likely to mean that something is seriously wrong with the operation of the programme. ALBSU believes that, in a high quality basic skills progamme, at least 80% of students who have received tuition should have made measurable progress in improving basic skills.

Student Attendance

31. Poor attendance is wasteful in basic skills programmes as in other areas of education. Scarce resources are dissipated and tuition time is inefficiently used. Furthermore, the time taken in following up students who do not attend could be put to better use in an area of work where staff time is at a premium. Basic skills groups where attendance is poor and there is high drop-out usually points to a problem. It may be that expectations are low and students take the view that not attending regularly doesn't really matter; it may be that teaching methods are innappropriate or that materials are poor or that the class is not well located. Whatever the reason it is waste that cannot be afforded.

32. Some students attend irregularly for unavoidable reasons. They may be on shift work or have child care difficulties. Travelling could be a problem or a more suitable learning opportunity may not exist in the area. Some drop-out is also inevitable. Some students have to leave programmes because they move house or change jobs or because their circumstances change. Others want to take a break for a while or progress to some other form of education or training. Some dissatisfaction is also inevitable and basic skills programmes do not always live up to every students' expectations.

33. Regular attendance should be a feature of a high quality basic skills programme, however, and students should be clear at the outset that part of the 'learning contract' they enter into when they join the programme involves a regular commitment to tuition. Group and individual tuition, styles of tuition which continue to involve the majority of students, depend on regular attendance and it is important that LEAs establish targets for student attendance for basic skills programmes. ALBSU believes that high quality group and

individual tuition as part of a basic skills programme should have a student attendance rate over at year of a least 65% of enrolments.

34. Open learning does not depend on attendance in quite the same way as group or individual tuition. Most students in open learning centres negotiate attendance or tend to 'drop-in' when it suits them. Often teaching is based on individual programmes of work and group teaching is less usual. Whilst the student attendance rate is not an appropriate 'programme indicator' for open learning, LEAs may want to establish an average 'capacity rate' for *open learning centres*. Thus, by establishing the total capacity of an open learning centre, the authority should be able to determine what the acceptable average capacity is for the centre. ALBSU's experience of monitoring and supporting open learning centres indicates that an average 'capacity rate' should be established as 75% of the total capacity of the centre.

Programme Cost

35. Cost is an important consideration in basic skills provision. Too high a cost is clearly wasteful and likely to mean that fewer potential students can be offered tuition than is desirable; too low an investment means that a programme will be of poor quality and often rely almost entirely on voluntary effort.

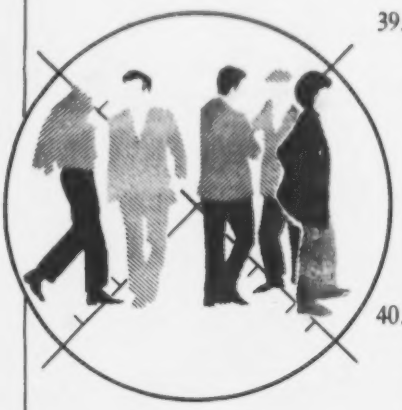
36. It is difficult to estimate accurately the cost of a basic skills programme and different authorities calculate costs in different ways. Often this is because there is not an identified, specific budget for basic skills, although the estabishment of basic skills as a 'programme area' in many Schemes of Delegation and a greater emphasis on planning, monitoring and evaluation should mean that the costs of basic skills programmes are rather more satisfactorily identified in the future.

37. ALBSU believes that the most beneficial way of considering costs in basic skills programmes is to concentrate on the *costs per tuition hour per student*. This identifies how much it actually costs to provide learning for each individual student and should allow comparisons to be made between different styles of provision. The cost of a tuition hour needs to include more than the direct costs of, for instance, a part-time teacher's hourly pay, particularly as there are considerable support costs involved in basic skills programmes. In calculating the costs per tuition hour per student, LEAs may wish to take into account:

- teacher pay costs
- support staff salary costs (including the cost of programme organisers, secretarial and clerical staff and other support staff)
- teaching and learning materials
- essential overheads.

38. *'Resourcing Adult Literacy and Basic Skills'* published by ALBSU in 1987, set out the Unit's recommendations concerning the level of funding for basic skills provision. This suggested an entitlement for all basic skills students of at least 4 hours tuition for 46 weeks of the year. It also outlined the number of organising staff per head of population in an LEA area. The Unit estimates that the level of funding needed to implement these relatively modest recommendations is between £3.50 and £4.00 per student per tuition hour. Clearly there are differences from area to area and some economies of scale; the Unit believes, however, that this level of resourcing, at 1990 prices, is a realistic target.

CONCLUSION



39. Evaluation of effectiveness is an essential task for everyone involved in adult literacy and basic skills provision – students, staff, volunteers, college and centre management, LEA officers and elected members. Effective and efficient basic skills provision is essential if adults are to be able to improve these crucial skills.

40. *'Evaluating Effectiveness in Adult Literacy and Basic Skills'* should help all of those involved in provision judge, in a relatively objective manner, whether the service is achieving its objectives and what steps need to be taken to improve what is available. Used sensitively, *'Evaluating Effectiveness'* should allow staff to improve their performance, policy makers to identify where additional support and development is needed and students to assess the tuition they receive against clear standards of good practice.

EVALUATING EFFECTIVENESS IN ADULT LITERACY AND BASIC SKILLS

A Basic Skills Programme Checklist

THE Basic Skills Checklist is intended to be used to help evaluate the effectiveness of a basic skills programme. By basic skills programme, ALBSU means basic skills provision in a specific geographical area or in a specific institution.

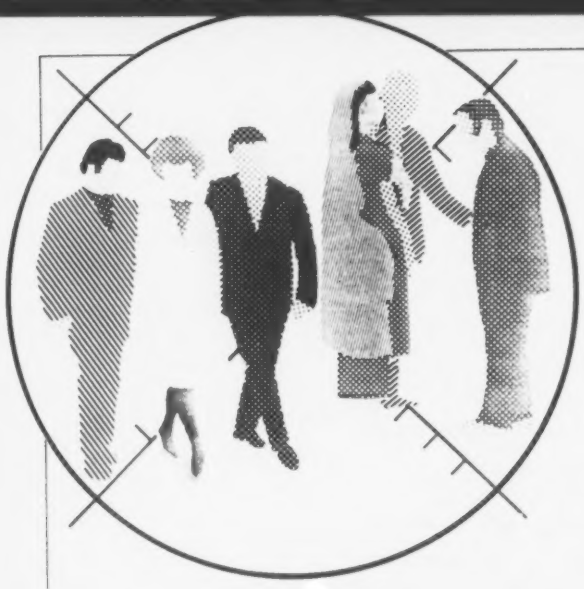
As an aid to help you assess the effectiveness of your basic skills programme, ALBSU has included a score sheet at the end of each question. The answers to each question in the Checklist can be scored on a scale of 0-10. Clearly the assessment depends, to a large extent, on individual judgement.

It is not necessary to complete the Checklist entirely alone and you may want to check your judgement with colleagues who are knowledgeable about the basic skills programme.

ALBSU believes that the *target score* needing to be gained *in each Section* for a basic skills service to be of high quality is approximately 75% of the total possible score. A total of 75% or above would indicate, therefore, a high quality basic skills service; a total between 50% and 75% would indicate adequate provision, although with room for improvement; a score of less than 50% would indicate inadequate basic skills provision with considerable need of improvement.

It is important to remember, however, that *the target score needs to be achieved in each Section* for the overall total to count. A basic skills programme with a very low funding base, but of good quality because of staff commitment, could not be considered a high quality programme.

There may be some relevant questions which are not included in the Checklist and it is possible for an LEA or providing organisation to amend the Checklist to suit local circumstances. The indicative scoring will need to be adjusted accordingly. The Checklist is intended to help you judge the effectiveness of current basic skills provision rather to disguise weaknesses.



EVALUATING EFFECTIVENESS IN ADULT LITERACY AND BASIC SKILLS

CHECKLIST

ALBSU
Adult Literacy & Basic Skills Unit

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CHECKLIST

Organisation _____

Member of staff completing checklist _____

Title _____ Date _____

PLANNING

A1. Is there a Plan of Development for basic skills work in the LEA?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

A2. Does the LEA Plan of Development identify the scope of basic skills provision, the financial resources to be made available for basic skills work and targets for provision for each year of the Plan?

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A3. Does the LEA Development Plan aim to secure basic skills provision for 10% of the estimated number of adults in need of basic skills in the Authority?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

A4. Is there a plan for the development of basic skills work in the college or centre?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

A5. Is there a statement of the scope of the basic skills programme in the college or centre?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

A6. Is there a target number of basic skills students to be recruited each year for the basic skills programme?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

A7. Is there a formal procedure for monitoring and evaluating the basic skills programme?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

A8. Is there a written set of aims and objectives for the basic skills programme?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

A9. Have the aims and objectives been determined in consultation with those involved in provision?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

A10. Are the aims and objectives made available to funders, senior management, potential students, paid staff, volunteers?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

A11. Are the aims and objectives reconsidered at least every three years in consultation with those involved in the programme?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

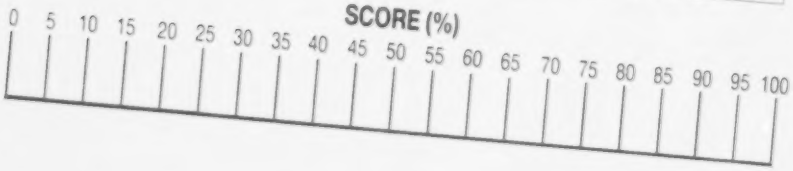
A12. Do the aims and objectives of the basic skills programme take account of equal opportunities issues?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

A13. Is a report on basic skills provision produced and made available at least once a year?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

SCORE (%)



RESOURCES

B1. Is there a specific budget for the basic skills programme?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

B2. Is basic skills tuition available free of charge to all students?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

B3. Is there a ratio of at least one full-time basic skills organiser or equivalent to every 70,000-90,000 adults in the programme's catchment area?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

B4. Is there a specialist County or Borough Inspector, Adviser or Co-ordinator for basic skills in the LEA?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

B5. Is the County or Borough Inspector, Adviser or Co-ordinator graded at Principal Officer (or equivalent) or above?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

B6. Are local organisers for the basic skills programme graded at Senior Lecturer level (or equivalent) or above?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

B7. Are part-time organising staff employed for at least 12 hours per week for at least 46 weeks per year?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

B8. Is an average ratio of 1 paid tutor to 6-8 students at a beginning level and 1 paid tutor to 8-10 students at a more advanced level operated in learning groups?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

B9. Is an average of £7-£10 per student receiving tuition allocated for the purchase of learning materials per year?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

B10. Is there the equivalent of a full-time secretary for every full-time organiser or co-ordinator?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

B11. Are part-time staff able to claim essential out of pocket expenses such as travel costs?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

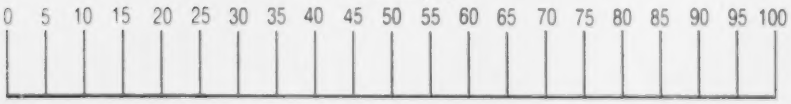
B12. Are volunteers able to claim travel expenses if they wish to do so?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

B13. Is the average cost of basic skills tuition between £3.50 and £4.00 per hour per student.

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

SCORE (%)



C1. Is publicity and outreach targetted at specific groups in the local community?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

C2. Are all basic skills students entitled to a minimum of 4 hours of tuition per week?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

C3. Is basic skills tuition available for at least 46 weeks per year?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

C4. Are all basic skills students able to choose from at least two different types of learning opportunity? (i.e. group, open learning, one to one, etc.)

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

C5. Is at least 40% of basic skills provision accessible to adults with disabilities?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

C6. Is there a basic skills resource centre for every 70,000-90,000 adults in the programme's catchment area?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

C7. Is a wide range of learning material available for at least 70% of the students in tuition?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

C8. Does the basic skills programme have at least a 65% attendance rate by basic skills students?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

C9. Have at least 80% of students in the basic skills programme made measurable progress in the last year?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

C10. Have at least 75% of those students taking qualifications (i.e. certificates) obtained the qualification in the last year?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

C11. Have less than 15% of basic skills students left the Programme in the last two years because they were dissatisfied with tuition?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

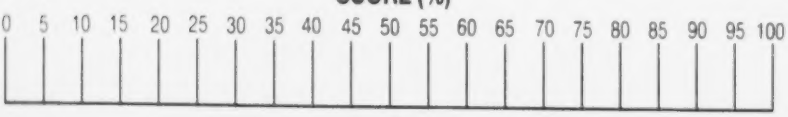
C12. Is there close liaison with other services in the area including liaison with other providers of basic skills tuition or training?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

C13. Is at least 80% of the accommodation used for basic skills tuition well decorated and in a good state of repair?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

SCORE (%)



D1. Are potential new students given a personal interview before they begin tuition?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

D2. Is new students' competence in basic skills assessed before they begin tuition?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

D3. Are the results of initial assessment made available to the student?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

D4. Does the learning material available appropriately reflect equal opportunities and gender?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

D5. Is there a 'learning plan' for each student?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

D6. Do tutors use written lesson plans and keep a record of work undertaken in each session?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

D7. Are basic skills students involved in determining the curriculum?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

D8. Is students' progress assessed after approximately every 40 hours of tution?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

D9. Are records of students' progress kept?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

D10. Is assessment of progress a joint process between student and tutor?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

D11. Is the result of an assessment of progress made available to the student concerned?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

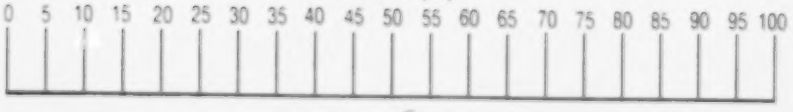
D12. Is advice and guidance available for basic skills students?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

D13. Is continuing support provided for basic skills students progressing to further education or other courses/programmes?

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	YES

SCORE (%)



STAFFING

E1. Do the staff and volunteers reflect the ethnic make-up of the local community?

NO 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 YES

E2. Are paid staff and volunteers interviewed and selected before appointment?

NO 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 YES

E3. Do paid staff and volunteers have a clear outline of their role and responsibilities before beginning basic skills work?

NO 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 YES

E4. Do at least 85% of staff stay with the basic skills programme for a minimum of one year?

NO 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 YES

E5. Do at least 70% of volunteers stay with the basic skills programme for a minimum of one year?

NO 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 YES

E6. Is a figure equivalent to at least 5% of the total basic skills budget, allocated for staff development and training each year?

NO 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 YES

E7. Is training available during work time for paid staff in basic skills?

NO 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 YES

E8. Are paid staff and volunteers required to take at least 30 hours of pre-service initial training before beginning basic skills work?

NO 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 YES

E9. Does Initial Training for paid staff and volunteers lead to a nationally recognised qualification in teaching basic skills to adults?

NO 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 YES

E10. Are full-time paid staff entitled to at least 30 hours in-service training in basic skills work per year?

NO 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 YES

E11. Are all part-time paid staff who are employed for 12 hours or more per week able to take advantage of at least 16 hours in-service training in basic skills per year?

NO 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 YES

E12. Are part-time paid staff employed for 11 hours or less per week and volunteers able to take advantage of at least 12 hours of in-service training in basic skills each year?

NO 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 YES

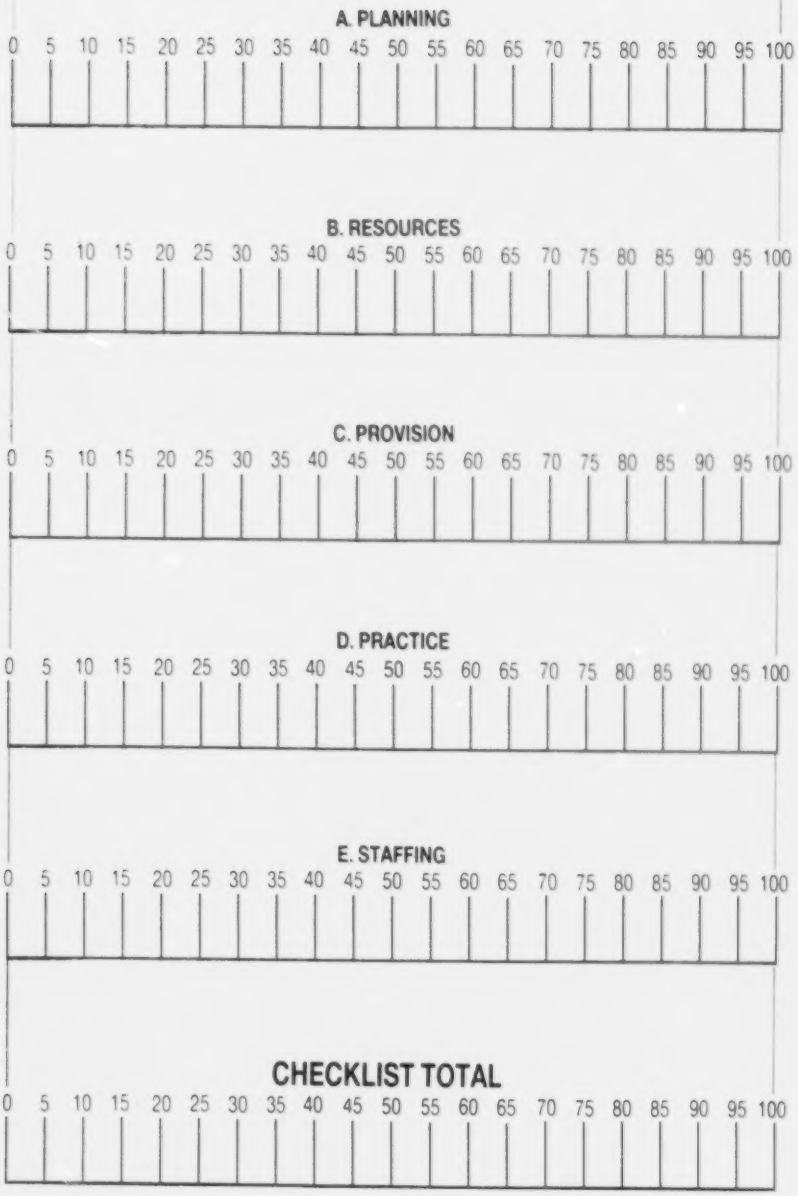
E13. Are paid staff or volunteers able to take nationally recognised, in-service qualifications in teaching basic skills to adults?

NO 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 YES

SCORE (%)

0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50 55 60 65 70 75 80 85 90 95 100

CHECKLIST TOTALS



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'Evaluating Effectiveness in Adult Literacy and Basic Skills' has been produced with the help of a small Advisory Group convened by ALBSU.

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'Evaluating Effectiveness in Adult Literacy and Basic Skills' was also extensively piloted before publication.

THE Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit (ALBSU) is the national agency for adult literacy, numeracy and related basic skills in England and Wales. Established in 1980, ALBSU is funded by the Department of Education and Science and the Welsh Office Education Department.

The Unit's current grant is just over £3,000,000 per annum.

ALBSU

- provides advisory and consultancy services
- sponsors development projects
- produces teaching and learning material
- funds and co-ordinates staff development and training
- provides grants for voluntary bodies and national organisations and funds a limited amount of research.

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